

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
TENNESSEE VALLEY AUTHORITY
NORMANDY DAM DROUGHT RESPONSE RELEASE SCHEDULE
CHANGE, COFFEE, BEDFORD, MARSHALL, AND MAURY COUNTIES,
TENNESSEE

The state of Tennessee on behalf of the Duck River Utility Commission has requested TVA to change the release schedule at Normandy Dam by immediately reducing the flow as measured at Shelbyville (Duck River Mile (DRM) 224.1) from 155 cubic feet per second (cfs) to 120 cfs. TVA provides minimum flows at Shelbyville of 155 cfs from June 1 through November 30 and 120 cfs from December 1 through May 31. The requested change would implement the flow reduction from 155 to 120 cfs several weeks earlier than normal. Middle Tennessee is experiencing an exceptional drought and consequently the pool elevation of Normandy Reservoir is much lower than normal. This reservoir is the source of water for the Duck River Utility Commission (DRUC) which serves the cities of Tullahoma and Manchester. Several other utilities obtain their water from the Duck River downstream of Normandy Dam and during much of the year are dependent on releases from the dam. The proposed change would conserve water in Normandy Reservoir to help meet the needs of the DRUC and other users of Normandy Reservoir. It would reduce the amount of water in late October and November 2007 for those utilities withdrawing water from the river downstream of Normandy Dam, but better ensure that more water is available in later months if the drought persists.

TVA has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) of this proposed change in the Normandy Dam release schedule; this EA is incorporated by reference. The EA evaluates the following two alternatives: 1) No Action, under which TVA would not change the release schedule; and 2) Change Normandy Dam Release Schedule, the action alternative. Under the action alternative, TVA would change the Normandy Dam release schedule as requested by the state of Tennessee to reduce the minimum flow at Shelbyville from 155 cfs to 120 cfs as soon as possible for the fall of 2007. The proposed change would occur in two increments, with the first from 155 cfs to 140 cfs, where it would be maintained for two weeks, and then the second from 140 cfs to 120 cfs. As part of Alternative 2, the state of Tennessee, through the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) and the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA), The Nature Conservancy, and TVA would jointly implement a program to model, sample, and monitor aquatic habitat and water quality in the affected reach of the Duck River downstream of Normandy Dam. This program is described in detail in the EA.

The proposed change in the release schedule would have no or minimal impacts on cultural resources, prime farmland, land use, Wild and Scenic Rivers, streams listed on the nationwide Rivers Inventory, floodplains and flood risk, wetlands, vegetation, wildlife, invasive species, and no release of air emissions, wastewater streams, or solid or hazardous waste. The proposed change would marginally improve recreation on Normandy Reservoir compared to the no action alternative, and not adversely affect recreational usage of the river downstream of the dam.

No impacts to terrestrial animals or plants listed as endangered, threatened, or other special status under the Endangered Species Act or by the state of Tennessee are anticipated. The proposed action does have the potential to affect water quality, endangered and threatened fish

and mollusks, and other aquatic life in the Duck River downstream of Normandy Dam for a temporary period. The EA describes these potential impacts and concludes that they would not be significant. In the EA, TVA also concludes that the proposed change is not likely to adversely affect federally listed fish or mussel species. This conclusion is based on the implementation of the monitoring program and TVA's commitment to increase flows in the event that the monitoring results show that the release change is adversely affecting aquatic species and/or water quality. TVA would coordinate with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and TWRA prior to taking this remedial action.


A draft of the EA was reviewed by the TDEC Division of Water Pollution Control, TWRA, and the USFWS. Their comments have been incorporated into the EA. In addition, the USFWS concurred with TVA's determination that the proposed change in the Normandy Dam release schedule is not likely to adversely affect federally listed fish or mussel species.

Mitigation

The implementation of the proposed change in the Normandy Dam release schedule is dependent on the implementation of the monitoring program and TVA's commitment to increase the flows, following coordination with USFWS and TWRA, if the results of the monitoring show adverse affects on aquatic species and/or water quality. No additional non-routine mitigation measures have been identified as necessary to further minimize environmental impacts.

Conclusion and Findings

Based on the findings of the EA, we conclude that the proposed change in the Normandy Dam release schedule would not be a major federal action significantly affecting the environment. Accordingly, an Environmental Impact Statement is not required.



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Date Signed